

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7307
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 10189

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, RP
SUBJECT: THEMES IN THE MARCOS SPEECH OF JUNE 12

REF: MANILA 9843

1. SUMMARY: MARCOS' JUNE 12 SPEECH TO THE NEW INTERIM LEGISLATURE (SUMMARIZED REFTEL) STRESSED THE THEME OF MOVEMENT IN THE DIRECTION OF POLITICAL "NORMALIZATION" WHILE CONTINUING THE REFORMS OF HIS MARTIAL LAW RULE. HE REFUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL CONCESSIONS SUCH AS PARTIALLY LIFTING MARTIAL LAW OR PROMISING LOCAL ELECTIONS SOON, BUT HE WAS CONCILIATORY TOWARD THE OPPOSITION. AS BEFORE, HE DID NOT GO BEYOND GENERALITIES IN DESCRIBING HIS VISION OF THE EVENTUAL "NEW SOCIETY."
END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER MARCOS (AS HE IS NOW CALLED) WAS
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CHARACTERISTICALLY CAUTIOUS AND CONSERVATIVE IN HIS INAUGURAL STATE-OF-THE-NATION ADDRESS JUNE 12. THE CENTRAL THEME OF HIS CHARGE TO THE NEW INTERIM BATASANG PAMBANSA (IBP) WAS HIS DETERMINATION THAT IT CONTINUE AND FURTHER INSTITUTIONALIZE THE REFORMS HE HAS MADE DURING HIS FIVE AND ONE-HALF YEARS OF RULE BY DECREE. HE PORTRAYED THE IBP AS A NECESSARY FURTHER STEP TOWARD THE

GOALS OF "NORMALIZATION" AND A "NEW SOCIETY." ALTHOUGH HE INSISTED ON RETAINING THE OPTION TO CONTINUE ONE-MAN RULE, HE MAINTAINED THAT "TODAY WE MANIFEST IN FORMAL FORM OUR SHIFT FROM AUTHORITARIANISM TO LIBERALISM AGAINST THE TREND OF HISTORY WHICH CLAIMS THE IRREVERSIBILITY OF THE DRIFT TOWARDS AUTHORITARIANISM AND CENTRALISM."

3. THE SPEECH DID NOT GO AS FAR AS SOME HAD HOPED. FOR EXAMPLE, MARCOS DID NOT LIFT MARTIAL LAW IN SECURE AREAS OF THE COUNTRY, AS LOCAL RUMOR MILL HOLDS WAS IN AN EARLY DRAFT. SIMILARLY, HE QUASHED ANY LINGERING SPECULATION THAT LOCAL ELECTIONS MIGHT BE HELD IN THE NEAR FUTURE OR THAT THE IBP WILL BRING ABOUT THE TRANSITION TO FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1973 CONSTITUTION ANY TIME SOON.

4. THERE WERE, HOWEVER, POSITIVE ASPECTS TO THE SPEECH. MARCOS WAS MORE EMPHATIC THAN USUAL THAT HIS CONTINUED RULE BY DECREE IS UNDESIRABLE; HE EXPRESSED AWARENESS THAT, DESPITE ITS "EFFICIENCY," IT "EXPOSES US TO THE RISK OF PROLONGED ACCULTURATION AND ATTACHMENT TO CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITARIANISM." HE ALSO STRESSED THE THEME OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND MADE SOME CONCILIATORY MOVES TOWARD HIS OPPOSITION, NOTABLY THE BROADENING OF AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL DETAINEES AND THE PHASEOUT OF MILITARY TRIBUNALS IN FAVOR OF CIVILIAN COURTS. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THIS LATTER POINT APPEARED IN THE PUBLISHED OFFICIAL TEXT OF THE SPEECH, CONFIDENTIAL

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MARCOS SKIPPED IT AND SEVERAL OTHER PARAGRAPHS IN THE ACTUAL DELIVERY.)

5. AS IN THE PAST, MARCOS DID NOT DEFINE "NORMALIZATION" OR THE POLITICAL SHAPE OF HIS ULTIMATE "NEW SOCIETY" EXCEPT IN NEGATIVE TERMS, I.E., IT WILL NOT BE LIKE THE PREVIOUS SYSTEM. THUS IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THE PRECISE DIRECTIONS IN WHICH HE EXPECTS THE IBP TO MOVE, ALTHOUGH THE SPEECH WAS REplete WITH WARNINGS THAT IF THE IBP DID NOT VIGOROUSLY ASSUME ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, THE PRIME MINISTER/PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE TO ACT. PREDICTABLY, MARCOS WILL DO WHAT HE WILL DEEM NECESSARY TO INSURE THE CONTINUATION OF HIS PROGRAMS AND OF HIS OWN DOMINANCE, WHILE AT LEAST APPEARING TO SHARE POWER WITH THE IBP. MURPHY

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